*Europeanised or European? Representation by Civil Society Organisations in the EU policy making,* by Sandra Kröger (Colchester, ECPR Press), 2016, ISBN 978178552232190000

The central aim of this book is to scrutinise how the civil society organisations’ (CSOs) engagement in political representation can compensate for the shortcomings of traditional forms of democratic representation in the European Union (EU). By focusing on three types of representation – namely by agricultural CSOs, environmental CSOs and anti-poverty CSOs – the books seeks to answer two questions regarding CSOs’ capability: a) to reduce the EU’s institutional deficit by enhancing the representation of a broad range of interests, and b) to reduce the social deficit by contributing to the emergence of a European demos. The findings of the book speak to two research agendas: the first one, on the reconfiguration of political representation within advanced democracies, given the book’s focus on CSOs; and the second one, on the democratisation of the EU. The originality of this book is two-fold. First, the empirical findings are discussed by drawing on analytical insights from the two research agendas mentioned above. Second, the study relies on an extensive set of qualitative data – although it also employs limited quantitative data – that reflect how groups conceive interest representation, the means they deploy to represent their constituencies across the regional, national and European levels of governance, and how being involved in EU policy processes affects them. The innovative approach used to research the topic of this study has also a significant limitation, as the author clearly acknowledges it (p. 186): namely that the analysis draws on the CSOs’ subjective views, which are not corroborated with ‘hard facts’.

The study reaches two key conclusions with respect to the research questions pursued. First, with respect to the EU’s institutional deficit, the findings demonstrate that most of the CSOs – researched here – are ‘Europeanised’, and subsequently, are able to address this deficit by acting as ‘transmission belts’ of European citizens and constituencies in EU policymaking. Agricultural CSOs are better placed to play this role. With respect to the EU’s social deficit, the findings of the study are pessimistic: most CSOs do not act as intermediaries between the EU and national peoples. Therefore, the book rejects the ‘idea of CSOs univocally contributing to the creation and representation of *one* European *demos*’ (p.193). Despite being ‘Europeanised’ to different degrees, the CSOs under scrutiny are not ‘European’ in the sense that they fail to represent a ‘European’ interest, as opposed to national or sectoral interests. However, the engagement with EU affairs impacts those CSOs that received EU-funding, and this is further conducive to their professionalization.

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